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SUBJECT: INFORMAL PRESIDENTIAL POLL: ATIKU DOESN'T MAKE THE
TOP TEN

¶1. On July 24, the Daily Champion newspaper published an informal poll of possible presidential candidates in Nigeria. The poll question was "Who do you want to be the next president?" The poll ran from May 29 to July 22 and was widely publicized on popular radio stations. To participate, Nigerians sent cellular phone text messages naming their choice for "A People's President," regardless of party affiliation. The poll made no claims to scientific accuracy, and post does not present it as such. We repeat the poll results here as an interesting snapshot of the thinking of a cross-section of Nigerians.

¶2. Published poll results merely listed the 10 most popular candidates. The organizers did not release the total number of votes received or the rank order of the top ten. The poll found that the 10 most popular presidential candidates were:

Professor Dora Akunyili, Director-General of NAFDAC
General Ibrahim Babangida, former military head of state
General Muhammadu Buhari, former military head of state
Governor Donald Duke, Cross River State
Governor Sam Egwu, Ebonyi State
Governor Orji Kalu, Abia State
Governor Peter Odili, Rivers State
Reverend Chris Okotie, founder of the Fresh Political Party
Mallam Nasir el-Rufai, Minister of the Federal Capital Territory
Professor Pat Utomi, director of Lagos Business School

¶3. The survey was sponsored by Silverbird Group, owners of Silverbird Television and Rhythm FM; Vanguard Media, publishers of the Vanguard newspaper; and Daar Communications, owners of Ray Power FM and Africa Independent Television. Survey results were verified by the accounting firm Akintola Williams Deloitte.

¶4. COMMENT. While the list of candidates is an interesting snapshot of who potential presidential candidates might be, what is more interesting are two names which are not on the list. Most significantly, Vice President Atiku Abubakar did not muster enough popular support to appear in the top ten. Also missing is former military governor of Lagos State General Buba Marwa. Marwa launched his campaign in June, and Atiku has long been the center of public speculation surrounding his ambitions for the presidency. END COMMENT.
FUREY